

Research States: Having An Expressive Face Makes You More Likeable.

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As humans, [we produce an average of 101 facial expressions per minute](#) throughout usual social interactions. Our profound ability to make facial expressions dates back to the beginning of time; it is an evolutionary trait. We relied on trust within our communities in order to be provided shelter, food, and protection. Unlike now, social interactions had high stakes— they were a matter of life and death. Genes and traits throughout history that made our lives as humans easier have been passed on through generations, with scientists believing that facial expressions is one of them. Have you ever felt intimidated by someone just due to the empty facial expressions they held when you first met? Chances are you felt this way, because you had no clear insights as to how they thought about you. Up and coming research explains having an expressive face makes you more likeable because it allows others to feel they can genuinely read and understand you, which enforces trust, in addition to simply liking you.



The importance of facial expressions within face-to-face discussions is often overlooked. On a daily basis, facial expressions help us with persuasion and to offer feelings of comfort and genuineness toward those we interact with. In short, they make our social lives way easier. While it has been decades in which research has been conducted regarding the benefits of being facially expressive, there is still more work to be done. [The foundation of our understanding of facial behavior is based on self-based questionnaires and lab studies where people's faces are observed while doing mundane tasks.](#) However, there is a lack of research during raw and genuine social interactions, where this socially advantageous phenomenon seems to take place. In addition, there is a common misconception that facial behaviors only have to be related to the emotions that the individual is feeling. Rather, facial expressions are more commonly a means of communication and tools to express motive within the specific context of a social interaction. We can make expressions that are not necessarily genuine to our emotional state, but to the impression we want to give to our audience or whoever we are interacting with.

With facial expressions being considered an evolutionary trait, humans have experienced a multitude of adapting in terms of technological advances. With the rising popularity of virtual communication through media platforms such as Zoom, physical person-to-person contact is now becoming less prioritized. Social cues during video calls can be less prominent which can negatively impact the quality of first impressions and conversations. However, [recent studies reveal that we unconsciously have been adapting to CMC, or computer mediated communications](#). In lack of verbal cues, we do provide more expressive facial expressions within virtual conversations to compensate, especially when our self-view is on. However, this is not all that positive as an individual witnessing their own face on video call interferes with the raw and genuine interaction that would have occurred if they were physically together face to face. This is because through CMC's self view on video calls, we often do not engage to the greatest extent in virtual conversations as we are too self-conscious staring at our faces, ensuring that we look presentable enough. This can allow more room for insecurity and lower-quality conversations.

While facial expressions allow for more social advantages, unfortunately not everybody is able to obtain these benefits. Our faces are considered “tools”, there is no doubt that they make our lives easier. Unfortunately those with disorders such as autism or peripheral facial palsy, which is a condition that impacts facial muscle control, are unable to completely utilize the aspect of controlling or perceiving how your face is viewed among a social interaction. [This may cause them to feel apprehensive within social situations](#).



All in all, the ability to make facial expressions within daily social interactions whether the reasoning is for mere expression, communication and signaling, or even manipulation, are a major part of our social identity and makes our lives as humans easier. It is important to recognize how not having these expressive tendencies can hinder our interactions with other human beings. Facial expressions have been reinforced as important since the beginning of time, with adaptations becoming more and more prominent and modern with the introduction of new technology such as video communication. As humans, despite consistent technological advancements, it is our duty to ensure that the beauty of face-to face conversations are not lost within these advancements.

